Screamsheet

TABLE OF CONTENTS

by Dr. Odd

Since it's inception, since it has been christened, Cyberpunk has been regarded as a commercial label, a convenient tag to describe a certain way of writing and a certain set of literary flash card images. The general reaction in the science fiction professional community (i.e. the writers, editors, marketing flacks, etc...) is that it is no more than just another fad, purely a marketing gimmick with nothing really new to offer. None of the insiders see any substance in it, and this attitude oozes out all over the place at the science fiction convention seminars on the subject, and even in the online scroll.

In recent times this attitude has changed somewhat with the critical popularity of the late lamented Max Headroom, the success of Robocop, and the decent sales of Cyberpunk books. In fact Cyberpunk has generated enough interest to make even the ever-$-conscious Hollywood take note, with a number of movie deals in the works (Neuromancer of course, Black Glass with a script by John Shirley, and Microchip another script currently being worked on by the ever voluble and voluminous Shirley). Interest in the subject, in the style, is stirring in the loins of the money men. Almost as if there was something to it, some form amidst the speckled reflections bouncing from all those gleaming surfaces, some substance behind the atmospheric haze.....

Of course, in the opinion of many pundits Cyberpunk has no substance. Nothing there but a set of surfaces and textures, evokative digitally processed images and moody landscapes generated by a mind zoned out on high tech static, about as deep as your average MTV video. They see a lack of explicit moral values (automatic fail point in this dawning age of moral constipation) or even any particular points which Cyberpunk may be making. In their view it's just a hardware catalogue of the near future.

But how can Cyberpunk be empty of meaning and achieve the underground popularity that it already has? (Of course, depth is hardly a prerequisite for popularity with the teeming multitudes. Witness the geologically recent success of a phenomenon known as Network Television.) However, the fact is that Cyberpunk has struck a responsive chord in a rather interesting segment of society-the rebels, the fringies, and the outsiders who lurk on the leading edge of our culture. All people with a slightly folded frame of mind, such as Dr. Odd, and perhaps even you. What do they, what do we, see in it? Is Cyberpunk just mindless high gloss, high velocity entertainment or is there something more to it?

It would be foolish to deny that the packaging alone is a big part of the attraction. The high gloss world of Cyberpunk is exciting enough to make at least some of our neurons cream with pleasure. Couple this with that tense sensation of danger inevitably lurking on every corner of the street-smart Cyberpunk world and you have enough to attract a lot of intellectual thrill seekers. Without a doubt Cyberpunk packaging seems to satisfy that craving for sensory overload tacitly encouraged in so many aspects of our beloved western culture.

But undeniably, there is more to Cyberpunk than just the wrapper. One hint of this is that the concepts, the look, and the feel of Cyberpunk independently popped up in so many places. Max Headroom was conceived, according to Michael Cassutt, one of the people behind it, in parallel with the work of Riddley Scott (his commercials and, of course, Bladerunner). Gibson says that he saw Bladerunner about a third of the way through writing Neuromancer and was amazed by how much it looked like "the inside of my head". The movie Videodrome came out before both of those works and touched on many similar themes.
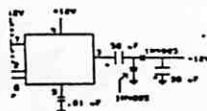
up in parallel all over the place because it is a reflection of what is going on our culture. Examples? You can see the seedy face of technology in things like the sophisticated hydrophonic pot farms in the hills, protected by the latest in electronic surveillance equipment. The all pervasive media is so pervasive that, well, it's everywhere, literally pointing a camera into peoples shorts. The steep slope of change can be seen in things like RAM capacity doubling every 3 years or in the new strains of biogenetically designed bacteria popping up every other day in a new garden plot. And animating it all is the escalating struggle for control between the globe-spanning corporations with their legions of business suited mercenaries, the government unable to make laws fast enough to keep up with the times, and the ever more powerful individual, who can more and more inflict himself on society via the juice of personal technology. Cyberpunk as a world view could not have been possible in the 60's simply because the elements were not all there as yet. No microchips in every appliance, no recombinent DNA, no artificial hearts or colcheal implants, no AI to speak of, no video pirates or hackers or phone phreaks or designer drugs. As much as the spaceships of mainstream science fiction were an outgrowth of American preoccupation with space flight in the 60's so Cyberpunk is a reflection of our generation's preoccupation with the culture of information and with the very pop of culture.

One can argue that the substance of Cyberpunk lies precisely in the fact that it reflects the values of our society, and more then that, in its rather cynical and irreverent attitude towards what we are becoming (not to mention its considerable entertainment value, something worth remembering least we get too serious about it). It is a glimpse of where we are heading taken to its inevitable sharp edged extreme, by turns mocking what we are becoming and seducing us with the plastic chrome and chintzy glitter of a world stuck on sensory afterburner. Sort of a pornography of rampant commercialism mixed with an injection of artificial adrenalin and liberally spiked with an extra high dose of neurotransmitters. You can either take Cyberpunk as a warning of Things To Come or as a pointer to where we are heading complete with the formula for how to survive there-cynical self interest, intellectual rebellion, fierce democratization of technology and the ability to outrun the pace of change. Adopt or burn out. Afterburner or Lobotomy City. Your choice.

\#
Cyberpunk characters live on the fringes of society; for that matter cyberpunk society is nothing but fringe.

-Brooks Landon
\#

it does the issues of the moment, has within it the seeds of its own destruction. It is self limiting because it so closely reflects the culture of our own time. Due to this contemporary nature of Cyberpunk I do not believe that it will be with us 20 years from now in the way that we see it here today. It is in the nature of society to mutate, and popular literature and pop culture (a large part of what Cyberpunk is) reflects the issues of the moment and mutates faster then most other aspects of society. Unless we choose to do something about it Cyberpunk will inevitably become outdated. In fact, I suspect that our culture will change faster and in weirder directions than even Cyberpunk can envision.

The question then becomes, should we do something about it? Should we firm up the philosophical girders of Cyberpunk or should we just surf the cultural feed and hope we don't wipe out on the reef of high tech scrap? More importantly, is it worth bothering to take Cyberpunk seriously?

This, of course, is a question each of us must turn recursively onto him or herself, and the ultimate answer depends on whether Cyberpunk has something to offer to our miserable existence, something of use in the everyday struggle against the tedium and blandness of Deep Reality. Indeed, there is nothing wrong with enjoying the surface textures of Cyberpunk, in using it as an escape valve for flushing out the old reality queue. But I would argue that Cyberpunk, as CI and it's members may wish to define it, has something useful to give us in coping with the high speed, high bandwidth, high spin world of today and tomorrow. And it's up to each of us individually to dig in and suck up what we want out of it. (Think of this process as "personal culture", an analog of "personal technology". You get to choose the rules you play by.)

Anyway, if I got you to think about it, I have done my job and can get my dose of REM with well deserved tranquility. So hold the line avoid the static, and have a high bandwidth New Year.

Endit. ●

Cyberpunk Vocabulary

...more snappy phrases to make you the jargon ...kie you know you want to become. I am indebted ...T.K. 'cause I stole a lot of these phrases from ...Black. So give him the credit. Have any more ...phonious appellations?? Zap them over to CI or ...Odd online and share the wealth.

...rd Brain - a cold, calculating, unemotional ...son, somebody always running in pure floating ...nt mode (e.g. Mr. Spock).

...t, The - A group, clique or clatch (e.g. "Swell ...ty, let's join the melt!")

...ntat - Brainy individual, specifically one who ...stare at a problem without moving for a while ...d come up with an answer without doing any ...parent intermediate steps (like writing things ...wn).

...y-Ban Mode - wearing shades.

...duction - Slang for physical violence (e.g. "Hey ...shole, shut down (c.f.) your screamer (c.f.) or ...reduce your face!"). See also **packing,** ...ndling, stomping, etc..

...reamer - 1) Slang for mouth (e.g. "Hey ...shole, shut down (c.f.) your screamer!" 2) ...mething fast, sleek, and sexy, used as an ...pression of admiration (e.g. "She/He/It's a real ...reamer!) 3) Somebody who screams a lot while ...ing reduced (c.f.) 4) Somebody who screams a ...while being tightly interfaced (c.f.)

...roll, The - 1) The constant, unremitting, and ...erwhelming barrage of information absorbed by ...eryone in modern society from the modern ...edia, from Cyberspace feed, from the grapevine, ...d from any other means we have of tuning in to ...e world state. (E.g. we find out about the latest ...r in the Middle East, the latest hardware, the ...test vaporware from The Scroll.) 2) The term ...ed to describe the messages, bulletins, and other ...ta daily being produced and scrolled off various ...yberspace systems.

...hortwire - To burn out, flame out, splash down ...d generally crash mentally.

...hut Down - 1) To take out, destroy, remove, ...nish. 2) to shut up, used as an exclamation (e.g. ...ey asshole, shut down!")

...echno Scum - A personally very unpleasant, ...t technically brilliant individual.

...ight Interfacing - Sex

Fiction Literature

- Neuromancer by William Gibsen
- Count Zero by William Gibsen
- Hardwired by Walter Jon Williams
- Voice of the Whirlwind by Walter Jon Williams
- Burning Chrome short stories by William Gibsen
- The Artificial Kid by Bruce Sterling
- Schismatrix by Bruce Sterling
- Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology edited by Bruce Sterling
- Shockwave Rider by John Brunner
- Vaccum Flowers by Michael Swanwick
- Dr. Adder by J.K. Jeter
- Software by Rudy Rucker
- Nova by Samuel Delany
- The Running Man by Richard Bachman
- A Clockwork Orange by Aaaargh, I forgot his name!

Non Fiction Literature

- The Media Lab: Inventing the Future at MIT by Steward Brand
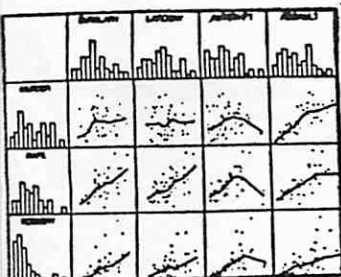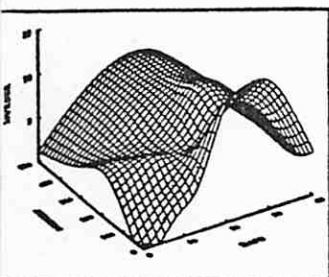- The Third Wave by Alvin Toffler
- Future Shock by Alvin Toffler

Movies

Bladerunner
Repo Man
Liquid Sky
Cafe Flesh
Mad Max
The Road Warrior
Mad Max III: Beyond Thunderdome
The Terminator
Alien
Videodrome
Scanners
Robocop
Rollerball

Video

Max Headroom (ABC Series)
Alive From Off Center (PBS Series)

DON'T BE A SLAVE

TO THE SYSTEM

CYBERPUNK

STRANGE things happen here!

As some of you may recall, in the last issue of *The Screamsheet* I offered $20 for the best really, really bad opening paragraph of a Cyberpunk novel. The two pieces which follow, Big Black by T.K. and Really Bad Cyberpunk by Manticora, were the only entries I received. Unfortunately, they are both too good to be bad.

Digital Rodents! What's this world coming to? You ask for trash and you get gold. (Well, maybe something that shines. In bright light, anyway...but seriously folks I liked it.) Anyway, I could not possibly choose one of those works and declare it the winner. That would be unfair to both authors. So in the grand tradition of American politics I decided to wimp out and compromise. Each of them gets $10. That's right, a crisp $10 bill to blow on anything they may be able to think of. Big money. Right. (Gee, Dr. Odd, ten bucks, what could you do with that much loot? Well, Johnny, there's that big sale at the Slightly Used Erotic Boutique. Or maybe 40 games of Slime Spitter at the local arcade. Of course, I could just go wild and blow it on a new personality slot, maybe something in neurotic coffee achiever, or the latest in split phase romantic, or...Oh, hell with it Johnny. Go buy some Draino.)

In any event here are the two pieces for your enjoyment and inspiration. Care to try your hand? Or maybe you'd rather use your foot? Send something in. As for more money, well, we'll talk. Have your people talk to my people. My machine will call your machine. Let's do lunch. Just send it in, O.K?

By the by, apologies to T.K. for stealing many of his neat phrases for the vocabulary section elsewhere in this issue. Hope his machine still talks to my machine after this. @

Big Black
by T.K.

Rad leaned over the bar, careful not to touch it. "Lise, program another round will ya?"

--"Of what H2O scum, some of your precious water?" This was Lise's way of being affectionate. Raised on steroids and raw meat, her methods were never subtle.

--"Fermented liquid lubrication, okay? Whatever you want to brew together as long as it carries a charge."

Lise grinned (or snarled, it was hard to tell) and after a moment's thought, punched a complex series of commands into the bar terminal. Above Rad's head there was a cool whirl of metal as first a fresh glass was deposited in front of him and then one by one a series of different bottles were sent gliding on the runners above his head from their storage matrix. Each arrived above his glass, rotated to the 45 degree angle, deposited a precise amount of liquid into his drink, rotated back up and returned quietly to its home. Rad took a sip of the cold, dark potion.

--"Not bad, not bad at all. What's this called?"

--"Big Black. Hand over your card." Lise slid the gold-edged card into the terminal where it subtracted the amount of the drink directly from his bank account.

Rad took another gulp, felt it hitting the lizard part of his brain, and reached behind his right ear to flick the switch there into ray-ban mode. Although the room was only dimly lit with sporadically placed blue neon lights (which in turn were somewhat obscured by the white steam filtering out of the air vents) he felt that he was going to need full retinal protection if he was going to finish this concoction. Two seats down from Rad a Wirehead started to sing:

--"Mary had a little cyborg, Little Borg, Little Borg..."

--"Whose scales were green as slime." The singer collapsed over the counter causing an explosion of light from underneath, leaving purple photographic prints where he had touched the surface. Rad blinked, despite his shades, tiered of this novelty feature which had long ago become passe.

--"Techno scum. He shortwires after two drinks and I'm the one who has to call security to clean him up."

--"You call that mutant, three-breasted Amazon from hell a security guard? Why don't you just be honest and tag her as the fun-loving sadist that she is."

Lise's eyes, one purple, one green, narrowed.

--"Keep your screamer shut, or you'll be sorry. Fatima hears that an you're chopped tofu."

Rad saw something gleam in the dark.

--"Hey, what's that on your finger? Could it be that I've spotted a highly portable, condensed form of material wealth meant to symbolize your attachment to another humanoid?"

--"Yeah, well I decided it was time for a commitment. Hitched on for a ten year contract."

--"Ooh. Sounds like love to me."
--"Maybe, maybe not. Let's just say I wanted to go with someone clean. Don't want to be like you with my v.d. pass all lit up."

--"Hey, my pass is clean as anybody's." Rad touched the aluminum dog-tag around his neck, traced with his fingertip the circle and arrow etched on it.

--"That's cause you haven't been to the Clinic in three months. Another week goes by and they'll freeze your card."

Rad was tiered of interfacing along these lines.

--"So who's the lucky girl? You never did say."

--"Fatima." Her eyes met his with a challenge.

--"Oh, hey, Lise that stuff I was saying earlier--that was just a..." He felt a robotic arm circle his neck gently but firmly.
--"Hey, Rad. Let's party," cooed Fatima, lickin his ear with her metallic tongue.

--"Chill Fatima. Lise buzzed you up here to wipe up that Pod at the end of the bar."

--"Oh, did she?" The grip tightened. "That's not what I heard." Rad saw, out of the corner of his eye, although it was hard to get a clear view with his inner shades on, the Wirehead sit up. Lise gave him a nod and he walked away.

--"Well, now that you're in a comfortable position, there are a few questions I'd like to ask you about that last run."

Rad felt the edges collapsing in from the center like a glass teat right after you cut the power.

--"Why me"-- were the last words he managed to get out. @

###########################
A scientist, noting the recent events in the stock market and the fact that computers were implicated in the turmoil, noted that it was rather ironic that we have managed to achieve **artificial insanity** before **artificial intelligence.**
###########################

Reba dropped the smouldering butt of her East German Clove cigarret--Cloves just hadn't been the same since Indonesia was fused into a sheet of radioactive glass--into the murky layer of ethanol in the bottom of her glass--whiskey just hadn't been the same since Scotland was fused into a sheet of radioactive glass. She left the bar and headed for Fogu Street, looking for a thrill. The Belgian spotted her through the door of his shop, recognizing her as a preferred customer, and waved her inside. She looked over the samples from his latest shipments. Synthetic hash--but hashish just hadn't been the same since Lebanon and Algiers were fused into sheets of radioactive glass. Laboratory smack--but opiates just hadn't been the same since Iran and Iraq were fused into sheets of radioactive glass. Street rock--but cocaine just hadn't been the same since Peru and Bolivia were fused into sheets of radioactive glass. then the Belgian pulled a foil-sheet of green hexagons out from behind the counter, and a slow smile crawled across Reba's face. No matter how fucked the world got, there was one thing you could always count on, and that was amphetamines.

(Ed Note: ....but amphetamines just hadn't been the same since....well, you know the rest.) @
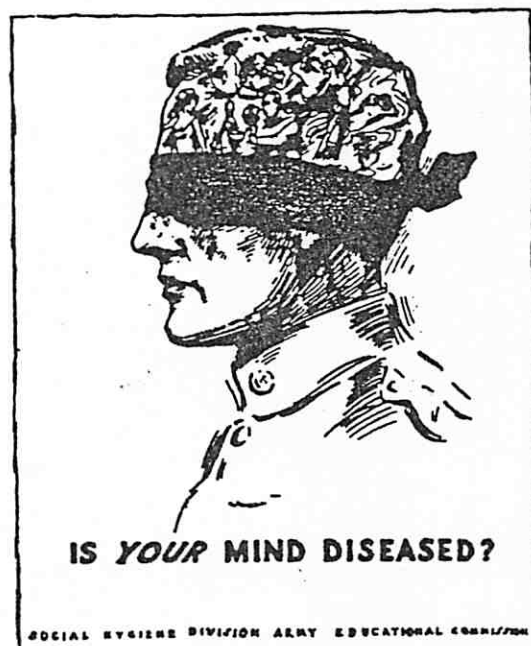
IS *YOUR* MIND DISEASED?

SOCIAL HYGIENE DIVISION ARMY EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION

19"

13"

Paul Clift

Inout:
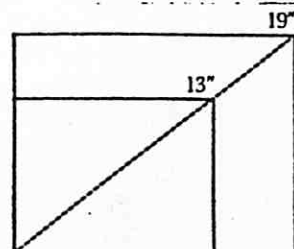
Information will heal all wounds. Information will cross all breaches, ford all streams.

Dissemination of Information = consciousness expansion (and we're not necessarily talking illegal and/or illicit drugs, but they're your brain cells). A broader base of information yields more coherent decisions ergo (cognito) (or incognito) information is power and in the 21st century information will be all.

'Normal' channels of communication corrupted = freedom for 'democracy' (if you can find out what they're really up to, they can't lie to you).

Complete dissemination of Information = no more sneaky shit, no more wars and no more corruption (*Ed Note: Ahhh, the eternal optimism! I envy that innocence*)

A Computer is nothing but information. All facts are nothing but a series of yes or no questions.

Communication = access to information.

Technology = access to information.

Withholding information at the right time will make you a rich person.

Not having information at the wrong time will make you a non person.

Information will cure you of all your sins.

Fact is verifiable circumstance. Verifiable is five senses input. Otherwise it's just bits.

Of Information

end transmission ●

©K.C. 1987

The third issue of *The Screamsheet*. Many months and many cycles since the last one. Lot's of news, and here it is.

CI Meetings

Node Prime in the SF Bay area has not had any meetings since our infamous party last summer. Mostly Dr. Odd's fault, not really having had the time to plan one (....you see Johnny needed this new attachment, and the surgery was kind of messy, so then it like, putrefied, you know?...and Dr. Odd had to use the meathooks....but you don't really want to hear about all this, right?). However, starting in January of 1988 Cyberpunk International will be holding monthly meetings in the Bay Area. They will be held during the last Sunday of every month at a pizza joint here in Sunnyvale. More details will be sent out to everybody about one or two weeks before the first one including the time, a map, and an agenda. Just another excuse to get together, exchange rumors, eat Pizza and generally get on each others nerves.

You've Been Stacked

That's right. All of you. How does it feel? Never mind, I don't want to know. Anyway, Cyberpunk International, in the form of Dr. Odd, has just purchased a new, improved, dandy Macintosh SE computer. With a Hard Disk no less (O.K. everybody, on three... one... two... three... "Ooooooohhhh....") *(Memo to self: New CI rule-no moaning at meetings)* Since the system comes with Hypercard, sort of a database program, but much more really, the member rolls of CI have been placed into a custom Hypercard Stack (What's a stack, Dr. Odd? It's a Hypercard data structure, Johnny. That or a collection of airplanes waiting to crash over O'Hare International. Now stop licking those scabs or your new attachment won't heal correctly). All this joyous retyping and stack creation account for part of the delay in getting your latest issue of *The Screamsheet* out. Anyway, dealing with all those addresses is a lot easier now, and some of the delay should go out of the mailing time for various CI junk.

Tomorrow, The World

Cyberpunk International is now really International. I just got a letter from Finland asking for CI materials. Our fame spreads via Cyberspace. Frightening, ain't it?

Online

If you have access to Cyberspace (also more mundanely known as national computer bulletin boards) you can contact Cyberpunk International in the person of Dr. Odd via the following methods:

On **Compuserve** I bear the splendidly eloquent name of 74030,437. (These people are stuck in the 60's when it comes to user friendliness, price per MIP transmitted, and general attitude. I hereby predict their ultimate demise on the playing fields of Cyberspace-sort of like the playing fields of Eaton, but with more gopher holes). If you are on Compuserve you know what to do with those digits. Just don't be too graphic when you describe it to me as I tend to read my mail after meals.

I can also be reached on USENET via a path that looks something like this:

{...ucbvax,decwrl,decvax,seismo,hplabs}! sun!portal!cup.portal.com!DrOdd

Alternatively, since Portal is registered on UUCP, ARPA, BITNET, and CSNET people on those networks can theoretically reach me via the following address:

DrOdd@cup.portal.com

Unfortunately Dr. Odd does not get the time to log on very often so do not be alarmed if you get no response from me quickly (taming Johnny is a full time job, not covered, alas, by Lloyd's of London). In fact unless you specifically ask for a response I may not give you any. This is not being rude, just busy. I appreciate all of you who do bother to correspond with me and enjoy reading your comments. Incidentally, any stuff submitted to *The Screamsheet* will definitely be acknowledged, and you will be profusely thanked and deified as one of the Heroes of the Cyberpunk Revolution. There may even be a public mausoleum in it for you after you die, where your corpse will get the chance to slowly dry out under glass as a line of people shuffle by remarking on how well you look, even though your tongue is hanging out a bit.

The Directory

I am delighted to see the great response to the idea of a CI directory. I have quite a few forms collecting somewhere in the vicinity of my desk. Literally tens of them. Literally. Trust me. This information will get stacked in Hypercard and will be published in the near future (couple of months), and mailed to all concerned. Thanks to everybody who responded. ●

Buddha in a can'

And now, 'massage' parlors for the brain

CINEFANTASTIQUE

Run, don't walk, to your nearest magazine stand and grab the December 1987 issue of this magazine. Among the usual movie studio hype about various science fiction films there is an article by Brooks Landon about Cyberpunk (pg. 27). This is a fine review of the state of the art in Cyberpunk as science fiction literature. In addition there are a number of interesting sidebars on the late lamented Max Headroom as well as a good writeup about ROBOCOP, the recent movie full of Cyberpunk overtones.

Here are a couple of my favorite quotes:

"Cyberpunk characters live on the fringes of society; for that matter, Cyberpunk society is nothing but fringe." - Brooks Landon, author of this article

"Load every rift with ore; put pennies in the fuses; jam the pedal to the floorboards, and go for broke. We're not going to survive this weirdest of centuries by dressing as elves. We need every mutant and nut case we can spare to beat the brush for paths to the next millennium" - Bruce Sterling

Finally I should note that the article is full of interesting references to Cyberpunk works in film, video, and book form. If you are Cyberpunk you want this issue. If you can't find it send a SASE (Stamped Self Addressed Envelope) to Cyberpunk International and I'll send you a copy of the article.

Little Heroes

This voluminous work by Norman Spinard is currently out in hardback. It is a story of the intertwined lives of several nobodies and their raise to minor greatness via street smarts, hustle, a little talent, and general desperation over how life is treating them. Having recently read it here is a mini review.

The protagonists are in all senses little people, not the movers and shakers of society by any means. There's a talented but nondescript pair of music/video synthesizer wizards who create cyberimages and cybersounds of nonexistent rock stars for the greater glory and profit of a giant Rock & Roll monopolistic music/record/video conglomerate, a classic Cyberpunk theme. There is an old, faded Rock & Roll queen living in style on her carefully managed savings from a minor career and on a huge number of connections in the music biz. There's a post-modern yuppie girl trying desperately to survive in the city of her dreams, a wildly expensive and have/have-not segregated Manhattan of the future. There's a skinny, poor, uneducated Puerto Rican street hustler who lives by his wits in the underbelly of New York, whose biggest dreams are to hustle some pussy and get his next hit of wire.

The book is a story of how their lives intertwine and are brought together by the social forces at work in this Cyberpunk world of the future. This world, while not as hardcore as "Neuromancer" or "Hardwired", has many Cyberpunk elements floating around in it.

There is Wire, a cheap, battery powered headpiece which lets you zap your brain and go on a phantasmagorical trip into your own dreams of glory. It's a piece of hardware which filters out of the illicit chip shops of Silicon Valley and makes life worth living for the poor and teeming masses rotting at the core of every urban concrete jungle.

the music conglomerate to create rock stars and video backgrounds out of pure bits, and to craft them to appeal to any given part of the psyche via a sophisticated combination of visual and sound cues. Think of it, no salaries to tempermental rock stars, and hits guaranteed to hit smack in the center of adolescent libido. It all adds up to Big $.

There's (of course) designer dust, drugs which get you high and leave your body alone, the creative currency of the music world.

On the social front we have a well crafted portrait of The Street, where life revolves around seedy clubs inhibited by wireheads who zone out on synthesized videos. A world where everybody has an angle and deals Wire, dust, or information. In contrast there is the glamour rock world of the music zaibatsu with all the extravagance we have come to associate with Rock & Roll in our own era. Here the rewards of belonging are a condo with a view, all the dust you can inhale, a company credit card, and admission to the oh-so exclusive Manhattan clubs, and an invitation to all the right parties. Not to mention the armed escorts to walk you through the streets teeming with low life's surviving on government rations of Kibble. Somewhere inbetween is The Reality Liberation Front, a group of hackers who sell illicit software which wipes out your IRS records, cracks codes on ATM machines, and in general sabotages the orderly progress of a computerized society.

The book is far from perfect, and in fact is rather tedious in places. Spinard seems to like to go off on these wild trips, getting into the heads of his characters and going on page after page about what a high it is to trip on Wire and compose music, to trip on Wire and make love, to trip on Wire and walk down the streets of Manhattan, to trip on Wire and listen to music, to trip on Wire and perform on stage.... Once, maybe twice, this would have worked, but to do it over and over again, well it gets boring and the reader finds himself skipping over all this dreck. The book is also suffused with wildly extravagant sentiment about the Good Old Days of Rock & Roll. It's very much a sixties mentality about music, glorifying the world of Janis, Hendrix, Morrison, and all those dinosaurs of R&R. It is a book suffused with nostalgia, and consequently not really well fitting, in the philosophical sense, with the cynical world view of Cyberpunk.

Overall the book is recommended reading, for the Cyberpunk world it envisions and the Cyberpunk sensibilities which it exhibits in places. However, in my opinion, the book doesn't really work very well as a literary work.

The Media Lab

The subtitle of this book by Steward Brand is "Inventing the Future at MIT". It is currently out in hardback, emblazoned with a hologram on the front.

The Media Lab is one of those intellectual playgrounds for academic hackers endowed by MIT and various foreward looking corporations. This non-ficition book is a trip through the bowels of this splendid institution with diversions along the way to philosophize on the power and direction of information technology. It is a book about Deep Real Cyberpunk technology as it is being created right now, at least from the zaibatsu point of view.

The Lab is composed of eleven groups which work on diverse facets of computer and information technology, all with the focus on the modern culture of information. The groups are as follows:

1) Electronic Publishing focusing on such things as electronic books, hypermedia and self personalizing newspapers, magazines, and video broadcasts.

2) Speech working on intelligent phone technology which can, for example, recognize your friends and talk to other phones on your behalf.

make TV sexier by putting computer intelligence inside the box.

4) Movies of the Future looking into such things as computer digitalization, image generation, CD based "paperback movies" and more.

5) Visual Language Workshop working on making computer graphics more spectacular and/or more realistic.

6) Spatial Imaging which looks at holography, and for example, it's generation by computer rather then by using real objects.

7) Computers & Entertainment, considered by their colleagues the lunatic fringe of the Lab and investigating all sorts of strange and wonderful computer fun.

8) Animation & Computer Graphics which is working towards real-time computer animation.

9) Computer Music investigating computer understanding of musical concepts and looking into new performance modes.

10) The School of the Future looking into what happens when computers get into grade schools.

11) Human-Machine Interface working on such things as machines which can read your lips or your eyes, which, according to the author, can feel like they're reading your mind.

The picture which emerges is of an institution with a refreshingly non-academic atmosphere, where the emphasis is on "Demo Or Die", the creation of things that work, rather then abstract flights of academic fancy. The Hacker ethic at work. In addition to dealing with the bedrock of Cyberpunk, communication, the whole enterprise is pervaded by another of the central concepts of Cyberpunk, that of personal technology. Most of the research is squarely aimed at giving the individual greater control over the flow and means of production of information.

The book itself is composed of chapters which discuss each of the groups listed above, as well as a section of chapters discussing the relationship of the Media Lab to the rest of the world and it's information technology future. The style is eminently readable, and even computer neophytes can easily get into it. It is also filled with entertaining quotes which begin each chapter. Some examples:

"Art is not a mirror
Art is a hammer" - Scrawled on a board in the Visual Language Lab

"We want to fashion puppets which pull their own strings" - Ann Marion

Finally, to it's credit, the book is dedicated to the drafters and defenders of the First Amendment, an important point considering the possible oppressive applications of Media Lab technology.

Overall the book is essential reading for the modern Cyberpunk. The concepts investigated at the Lab will leap out at anybody who has read Cyberpunk literature. They are the furniture of a familiar world which emerged from the imagination of the Cyberpunk writers and which all of us see becoming reality all about us. The Media Lab is truly inventing the future, more so than any dreams of starships and galactic empires. Read about it, because it is more then likely, inevitable even, that you will be living in their Cyberpunk future.

This is a new paperback by George Alec Effinger, just out and published by Bantam. Not having read it as yet, I quote from the back jacket copy:

"In a decadent world of cheap pleasures and easy death, Marid Audran has kept his independence and his identity the hard way. Still, like everybody else in the Budayeen, he is available...for a price. For a new kind of killer roams the streets of the decadent Arabic Ghetto, a madman whose bootlegged personality cartridges range from a sinister James Bond to a sadistic disembowler named Khan. And Marid Audran has been made an offer he can't refuse. The two hundred year old "godfather" of crime in the Budayeen has enlisted Marid as his instrument of vengeance. But first Marid must undergo the most sophisticated surgical implants before he dares to stop a killer with the powers of every psychopath since the beginning of time....Wry, savage and unforgettable. When Gravity Fails is a major new work of dark genius by one of the most celebrated talents in science fiction today-a cutting edge, heart stopping tour-de-force detective story about an insane future world not so far removed from our own."

Just for the hell of it here is some hype by Orson Scott Card quoted on the book as well:

"A breakthrough novel...this is what Cyberpunk will be when it grows up"

Hmmmmm...Sounds interesting. Check it out.

Eclipse

Out in paperback and written by John Shirley. This is book one of a trilogy called A Song Called Youth and if you have read Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology then you got a taste of this book from the short story of the same name (if memory serves correctly). I liked the story so I assume I will like the book. Again, not having yet read it I quote from the back jacket:

"There had been no time to fight...No time to resist...No time to rebuild. The Soviets invaded. NATO retaliated. The limited nuclear strike had stopped the Soviet advances; it hand even forced them back, but the price was high. The great cities of Europe were dead. And no one seemed to want to claim the survivors. Until NATO turned over the policing of the wreckage to the Second Alliance-a right wing, fundamentalist, supposedly neutral, international security corporation. Then, out of the rubble, the New Resistance was born. They were a motley crew of freedom fighters with few resources. Misfits, drop-outs, patriots, and partisans, they had nothing at all in common except their enemy, the Second Alliance and its soon-to-be-revealed purpose-a single minded determination to control the world"

Now, this does not sound like typical Cyberpunk jacket hype. However don't be put off by this junk from the marketing flacks. Shirley paints a picture of a very intense Cyberpunk world in this one, and like I said, judging by the short story I think you'll find it interesting.

Vaccum Flowers

A quick note: this excellent far future Cyberpunk novel by Michael Swanwick is now out in paperback. Go for it.

Nova Express

Last but not least I should mention this book by William Burroughs (who some feel was the model for proto-Cyberpunk writing). I know almost nothing about this book, having seen it's title in a list of the "100 Classic SF Books". The writeup said that this book is very much in the style of Naked Lunch (also by Burroughs), with no real plot but rather a stream of consciousness series of highly textured verbal moods and images in the Cyberpunk vein. Apparently it was published sometime in the early to mid 60s. If anybody has read it or will read it soon (as I intend to as soon as I get a free nanosecond), I would appreciate some feedback.

What Position Do You Want?

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for a larger salary in the position, trade, or profession, or gain a knowledge of the subject, before which I have marked X.

- Advertising Man
- Show-Card Writing
- Window Trimming
- Bookkeeper
- Stenographer
- Civil Service Exams.
- Commercial Law
- Banking
- Commercial English
- English Branches
- High-School Mathematics
- Teacher
- Commercial Illustrating
- Carpet Designing
- Wallpaper Designing
- Linoleum Designing
- Bookcover Designing
- Ornamental Designing
- Perspective Drawing
- Lettering and Sign Painting
- Stationary Engineer
- Marine Engineer
- Gas Engineer
- Automobile Running
- Refrigeration Engineer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Mechanical Draftsman
- Machine Designer
- Boiler Designer
- Patternmaking
- Toolmaking
- Foundry Work
- Blacksmithing
- Navigation
- Ocean and Lake Pilot
- Cotton Manufacturing
- Woolen Manufacturing
- Textile Designing

- Electrical Engineer
- Electric Lighting
- Electric Railways
- Heavy Electric Traction
- Electric Wireman
- Electric Machine Designer
- Telegraph Construction
- Telephone Expert
- Agriculture
- Poultry Farming
- Architecture
- Contracting and Building
- Concrete Construction
- Architectural Draftsman
- Monumental Draftsman
- Structural Engineer
- Bridge Engineer
- Structural Draftsman
- Plumbing & Steam Fitting
- Heating and Ventilation
- Plumbing Inspector
- Foreman Plumber
- Sheet-Metal Worker
- Civil Engineer
- Surveying and Mapping
- R. R. Constructing
- Municipal Engineer
- Mining Engineer
- Mine Surveyor
- Coal Mining
- Metal Mining
- Metallurgist
- Assayer
- Chemist
- French
- German
- Spanish
- Italian

Do you write?   Do you scribe?
Do you scribble?   Do you type?
Do you inscribe?   Do you scrawl?
Do you record?   Do you draft?

DO YOU GIVE A DAMN??

If you do
then

We want your letters!
We want your stories!
We want your gossip!
We want your manuscripts!
We want your core dumps!
We want your verbal hemorrhage!
We want to pick your brain!
We want to probe your psyche!
Some of us no doubt want your body!
But we'll settle for your words!

Don't Just Sit There!
Don't Just Vegetate!
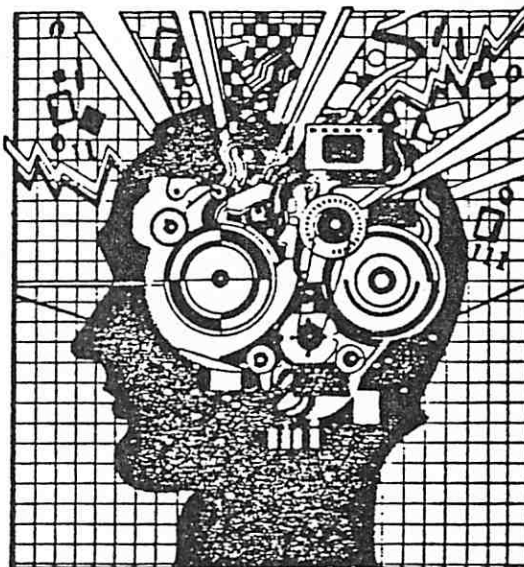## Write Something!!

And spool it over to us
send it to
Dr. Odd, P.O.B. 2187, Sunnyvale, CA 94087

CYBERPUNK INTERNATIONAL

HIGH BANDWIDTH COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

IN REALTIME MODE

FOR THE POST-MODERN TECHNO JUNKIE

JOIN NOW!

A BASTION OF TECHNOGLORY

ON THE WAVEFRONT OF A NEURAL BURST STORM

ORGANIZED TO SPREAD THE VIRUS OF

CYBERPUNK

Information and copies of the CI newsletter *The Screamsheet* available

☐ YES SEND ME STUFF!!. HERE IS MY **$3.00**
(Make checks payable to KATRA Services)
Cyberpunk International, P.O. Box 2187, Sunnyvale, CA 94087